



NEWS  
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# IN DIEM

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## A TIME TO HEAL

Alberto Melloni

Since 1 December 2020, Italy has been President of G20, the international forum that brings together the world's largest economies. The Group of Twenty has met every year since 1999, and since 2008 has included several meetings that have enriched the processes leading to the final Summits of the Heads of State and Government. One of such meetings is that of the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20), a network of institutions linked through religions that contribute ideas and recommendations in response to global issues.

In 2021, the IF20 annual conference will be held in Bologna from 12 to 14 September and coordinated by Fscire.

The central theme around which the activities and discussions of IF20 2021 will converge is *Time to Heal. Peace Among Cultures, Understanding Between Religions*, inspired by a biblical verse from Ecclesiastes. Today, now that the COVID-19 pandemic has already caused over two million deaths, these words are as evocative as ever. However, in Ecclesiastes, the verse refers not only to recovery from sickness, or from the COVID-19 pandemic that we are experiencing, but to something more profound: "A time to kill and a time to heal" describes healing from a different kind of disease. As Cardinal Matteo M. Zuppi highlighted in his concluding remarks at the Interfaith Forum 2020 in Riyadh, we need to recognise and come to terms with different kinds of pandemics: those of war, hatred, and hostility (the "time to kill" in Eccl. 3:3) that devour more lives than the pandemic itself, absorb more resources than any vaccine, sow despair and fear, and breed new hatreds, new hostilities, and new wars.

Faith communities know all too well that they cannot merely blame one another for disobeying the commandment "Thou shalt not kill". Their power (and their duty) is to become committed to one another and say "We shall not kill" and to reject violence in the name of the commandment that each has received.

*Therefore, dialogue cannot be limited to promoting exchanges of affection among religious leaders or to a praiseworthy commitment to delegitimise violence perpetrated 'in the name of God'. Interreligious dialogue must instead be rooted in knowledge and mutual understanding among the parties involved. Hence, what is needed is a dialogue about dialogue.*

There are many reasons for convening the IF20 2021 in Bologna. Besides being home to Fscire, the city is the seat of the oldest university in Europe, has a major archbishop's see, a lively Jewish community, and many faith communities that have come to live here in the last fifty years. Even more relevant, over the centuries Bologna has experienced the burden of discrimination, war, and terrorist violence, yet has emerged as a vibrant and diverse city today. Encounter and knowledge have forged the identity of this city. The IF20 2021 will build on these grounds: it will provide continuity in advancing the discussion on priority issues echoed in the ten Working Groups that constitute the IF20 (such as the role of religions in overcoming economic and gender inequality, facing the international crisis resulting from COVID-19, respecting the environment, promoting education, and supporting human rights), while showcasing how the strength of knowledge can tackle the thorniest problems in favour of individuals or entire societies.

*In order for this effort not to be restricted to a mere enunciation of high-sounding commitments, during the three-day Forum the IF20 and Fscire will promote activities aimed at stimulating public discussion and providing the G20 with food for thought.*

These will include plenary sessions, roundtables, and workshops involving interfaith and intercultural organisations, religious leaders and political authorities, scholars, humanitarian and development agencies, in addition to economic and civil society actors, all presided over by authoritative figures from the Italian and international intellectual scene.

The IF20 2021 will conclude with a document addressed to the G20 that converges in a short declaration of shared commitments – intended as a *Parva Charta* – of only three lines: "We will not kill one another"; "We will save one another"; "We will forgive one another" – which each religion or faith can sign, judging it to be rooted in its theological heritage and its hermeneutics of the sacred texts.

The outcome of the IF20 gathering in Bologna will be the *Connecting Souls* event, scheduled to take place on 16 November, the UN Day of Tolerance, in Dubai. Building on the Expo 2020 theme *Connecting Minds*, the conference will help translate the spirit of the issues raised by IF20 in Bologna to political and cultural decision-makers.



# WHAT IS THE G20 INTERFAITH FORUM?

Religions engaged in global policies

In 2018, 84% of the world’s population identified with a religious group, that is to say 5.8 billion religiously affiliated adults and children. In Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, or any other of the world’s estimated 4,200 belief systems, billions of people value faith and make it part of their lives. Of the world’s 7.53 billion people, nearly half of them live on less than \$ 2.50 a day. Some 833 million of these people live in slums. More than 750 million people lack adequate access to clean drinking water, and over 815 million people do not have enough food to eat. The planet is threatened by climate changes and the destruction of nature; in many parts of the world corruption and inadequate governance increase poverty, forced labour, human trafficking and enslavement, and breed violence, leaving millions of people in despair. The United Nations has formulated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to address this wide range of global issues. Every year, the countries having the richest economies meet in the G20 Summit to discuss the world’s problems, including these SDGs, and every year, as the meeting time of the G20 Summit approaches and in the same country, the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) swings into action. IF20 is a network of initiatives and institutions linked through religions that work continually to find solutions to global problems addressed in the SDGs. In their annual gatherings, IF20 members and guests discuss issues, share ideas and experiences, and formulate policy briefs and action plans to present to the G20 Summits. The Forum builds on the role that religious organisations can play in world affairs, reflecting their rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values.

“In the beginning, the G20 process focused mainly on economic issues, but these days it also concentrates on the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. If one reflects on this, the significant thing about it is that virtually all the UN SDGs can only be achieved if there are cooperation and synergy with the religious sector. For that reason, it is particularly important to have a religious influx into the G20 process. That is what the G20 Interfaith Forum is about: each year we discuss several different issues, such as trafficking and modern forms of slavery, environmental issues, various forms of inequality, reducing poverty, good governance, justice, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, refugee issues,” said Cole Durham, President of the G20 Interfaith Forum Association. He concludes:

*“That’s our end: to try and find ways to promote effective engagement with religious issues to recognise the kinds of things that religions can contribute to in significant ways, and, at the same time, to find ways that different networks can work together to provide their contributions to these problems”.*

Beginning in Australia in 2014, the G20 Interfaith Forum has convened annually ever since in the G20 host country. In order to act as a vehicle for committed individuals to propose and enact change, IF20 organises its work through a series of Working Groups which focus on areas of recurring relevance to G20 policy priorities. In particular, these standing Working Groups organise research, analysis, and Forum activities that relate to the UN SDGs and other matters of recurrent concern. In any given year, additional task forces may be set up to address issues of particular concern in the light of the G20 host country’s priorities or in response to other critical emergent issues.

Each year, the G20 Interfaith Forum develops policy briefs that are designed to provide a substantial input benefiting from the insights of a range of religious communities designed to be of assistance to those in official policy-making roles. In addition, each year’s Forum develops prioritised concrete recommendations for those engaged in the G20 process – recommendations that are designed to be delivered both to G20 Summit leaders, while having a broader relevance for the policy-making of public bodies operating at the international, regional, and national levels, and to those concerned with global policy issues in religious, interreligious, and academic settings.

# IF20 AGENDA

Three days to deal with religious illiteracy

The G20 Interfaith Forum 2021 will start on 12 September in the presence of President Sergio Mattarella. Greetings from local political authorities will be followed by a round table discussion focusing on the meaning and challenges of dialogue, held by religious leaders, representatives of international organisations, and scholars. On 13 September, the Interfaith Forum will continue with sessions addressing the priority issues that have been under discussion over the previous months within the Working Groups: education and religious illiteracy; gender equality and the inclusion of women; climate and other environmental issues; religion and technology; peace among

cultures, and legal issues concerning sacred sites and freedom of religion or belief; refugees, displacement, and migration; the post COVID scene; humanitarian aid; youth; violent extremism. Workshops and plenary sessions will be dedicated to these issues, involving international, governmental, non-governmental, and research organisations, and featuring some of the most influential figures on the international political and religious scenes. The Forum will culminate on 14 September with a summary of the results achieved in the previous days that will contribute to the political agenda, and a final round table on otherness, theology, and pluralistic society.



## B I O

**COLE DURHAM** is the President of the G20 Interfaith Forum Association. A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, Professor Durham has been deeply involved in comparative law scholarship, with a special emphasis on comparative constitutional law. He was until recently President of the International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ICLARS), and is currently Professor of Law at the SUSA Young Gates University and Founding Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS) at the J. Reuben Clark Law School of Brigham Young University.



**MATTEO LEPORE** is Councillor for Culture, Tourism, and Promotion of the City of Bologna. With a sound academic background in international relations, city planning, and economics, Matteo Lepore worked as a consultant before becoming District Councillor in 1999 and then Vice President of the Savena district of Bologna during the mandate 2004–2009. He was appointed Deputy Mayor in charge of Economic Development and City Promotion, Tourism, International Relations, and Digital Agenda in 2011 and was confirmed in that position for a second mandate in June 2016.



Cardinal **MATTEO MARIA ZUPPI** is the Archbishop of Bologna. He was ordained a priest for the clergy of Palestrina in 1981 by Bishop Renato Spallanzani, in the Cathedral of Sant’Agapito Martire. From 2005 to 2010, he was prefect of the third prefecture of Rome and from 2000 to 2012, general ecclesiastic assistant to the Sant’Egidio Community, after performing a role as mediator in Mozambique in the process that led to peace after over seventeen years of civil war. On 27 October 2015, Pope Francis promoted him to the metropolitan see of Bologna. He was appointed cardinal presbyter with the title of Sant’Egidio in Trastevere, on 5 October 2019.



**PIETRO BENASSI** is an Italian Diplomat. He was Advisor to the former Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, and G20 Sherpa. During his diplomatic career he held positions in Brussels, Havana, and Warsaw. From 2002 to 2005 he was First Counsellor in the Italian Embassy in Berlin as Head of the Political Bureau. Between 2009 and 2012 he was the Italian Ambassador to Tunisia, while in May 2013 he was appointed Head of Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emma Bonino. From September 2014 to August 2018, he served as Italian Ambassador to Berlin.



**FAISAL BIN MUAAMMAR** is the Secretary General of the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID). For decades, Mr. bin Muaammar has promoted interreligious tolerance, built intercultural understanding through local and international inter-community institutions and overseen knowledge improvement initiatives. Mr. Bin Muaammar is also Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. His senior positions in the Saudi Arabian administration have included Vice Minister of Education, Advisor to the Royal Court of then-Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Deputy of the National Guard for Cultural and Educational Affairs.



**KATHERINE MARSHALL** is the Vice President of the G20 Interfaith Forum Association. She is a Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, where she leads the centre’s work on religion and global development, and a Professor of the practice of development, conflict, and religion in the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She helped to create, and now serves as the executive director of, the World Faiths Development Dialogue. Marshall serves on the boards of several NGOs and on advisory groups, including AVINA Americas, the International Shinto Foundation, the Niwano Peace Prize International Selection Committee and the Opus Prize Foundation.





# THE CHALLENGES OF THE POST-COVID ERA

As President of the G20 Interfaith Forum Association, in his speech Professor Cole Durham highlights the main features of last year Forum and greets Italy, this year host.

On 3 December 2020, Fscire received the baton from the Saudi Presidency during a virtual ceremony chaired by Alberto Melloni, which featured the following speakers: Cole Durham; Matteo Lepore; Cardinal Matteo M. Zuppi; Pietro Benassi; Faisal bin Muaammar; Katherine Marshall; Nathalie Tocci; Elisabetta Belloni.

\_\_\_\_\_very period of “handing over the baton” in the G20 process is a compound of feelings of gratitude for everything that contributed to the success of the previous year and an anticipation of further opportunities available in the new host country. From 2020 to 2021 the IF20 Forum’s baton is passed from Riyadh to Bologna.

Last year’s event was remarkably successful on many fronts. The Forum in October brought together more than 2,000 participants from 90 countries, all of whom attended the first-ever virtual G20 Interfaith Forum. 28% of the participants joined it from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 14% from Austria, and 12% from the United States. It included 18 sessions in just over five days, and had 147 speakers representing 47 countries and numerous religions. The IF20 was also proud of the significant representation of women in the various sessions of the Forum.

It is also important to note that the Forum achieved a broad, interdisciplinary distribution of participants: 22% of those participating were religious leaders; another 17% came from faith based organisations; 17% came from academia; 17% from intergovernmental organisations; 15% were policy makers; 6% were experts in other fields and 6% came from the non-governmental organisation sector.

*Expert participants helped prepare carefully reviewed substantive policy briefs on a variety of key topics that helped ground many of the policy recommendations emerging from the Forum. These included policy briefs on religious roles in response to COVID-19, hate speech, refugees and forced migration, an interfaith approach to advancing inclusive education, governance and accountability, with an emphasis on fighting corruption in COVID-19 emergency situations, modern slavery, trading in human beings, and interfaith action to protect rainforests.*

In addition to expert development of the policy briefs, last year the IF20 was able to arrange six regional consultations. Each had a slightly different focus, depending on regional needs, but they all contributed important insights that were distilled into overall recommendations from the Forum and will continue to be of relevance as we work on recommendations this coming year.

We achieved significant geographical diversity in working on the regional representations. Thus, we had representatives from 14 African countries, 14 countries from the Arab region, 18 countries from Asia, 25 countries from Europe, 25 countries from Latin America, plus the United States and Canada.

All these inputs were distilled into five clusters of recommendations. They included addressing COVID-19 emergencies, including tackling vaccine issues and meeting the urgent needs of vulnerable communities. One cluster focused on promoting peace and resolving conflicts, among other things by supporting a global ceasefire during the global pandemic, addressing hate speech, and protecting sacred sites. A third cluster concerned empowering people in a variety of ways, including empowering women and opposing racism.



Cole Durham, President of the IF20

A fourth cluster addressed the increasingly urgent need to take steps that will protect the planet, including supporting rainforest initiatives and the Paris Climate Change agreement. Finally, a fifth set of recommendations faced the general issue of ways that synergies between religion and the public sector can be optimised. Notably, one of the major recommendations was that the G20 Interfaith Forum be designated as an official engagement group in future G20 Processes – a recommendation that was warmly received by the Saudi Arabian hosts of the 2020 G20 Summit.

These intensive initiatives attracted extensive media coverage around the world, including placements in nearly 500 traditional media sources with a potential reach of nearly 600,000,000 people in 23 countries.

We enjoyed a remarkable year, but we are looking forward to another particularly significant year as we now move to Italy. We have strong hopes that the advent of vaccines will mean that by September we can again experience a live meeting, and we hope that as things return to normal this is one of the many areas in which we will be able to “build back better”.

**NATHALIE TOCCI** is the Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). She received an undergraduate degree from the University of Oxford, followed by a post-graduate degree and doctorate from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Since 2015 she has been Special Advisor to the European Union’s High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission previously under Federica Mogherini and currently under Josep Borrell.



**ELISABETTA BELLONI** is Secretary General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Ambassador Belloni assumed her duties on 5 May 2016 after holding the post of Chief of Cabinet of the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Paolo Gentiloni, from June 2015 to May 2016. She studied Political Science at the Guido Carli Luiss University in Rome and joined the Foreign Service in 1985.



**ALBERTO MELLONI** is full Professor of History of Christianity at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Secretary of Fondazione per le scienze religiose (Fscire), and Chair Holder of the UNESCO Chair on Religious Pluralism and Peace at the University of Bologna. He has been a member of the Accademia dei Lincei since November 2017. In November 2020, he was appointed as a member of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors to the European Commission. He holds the Chair of the IF20 2021.



## FLASH

### THE AHL AL-BAYT IN MUSLIM SPIRITUALITY AND BEYOND: LITERATURE, PRACTICE, AND DEVOTION

In this workshop, participants are invited to explore some of the sources, produced in different languages and from a range of genres, devoted to the status and role of the “People of the Household” (Ahl al-bayt). They will analyse its reception in the works of the school of Ibn ‘Arabī, as well as the sources that are not directly connected with the Andalusian master but resonates with his thought.

The workshop will be held online on 25 September 2021.  
Info: panzeca@fscire.it



Sufi spiritual guide. 18th-century Mughal India

### CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: FSCIRE PH.D. PROGRAMME

Fscire (Bologna/Palermo) is offering three posts, of which at least one with a scholarship, in the fields of the history of religions, exegesis, and theology for the three-year *Perfezionamento scientifico* (Ph.D.) course (2021–2024) at the Giuseppe Alberigo European School for Advanced Religious Studies. The call is open to candidates of any nationality holding a Master’s degree in fields relating to the subjects of the course and obtained before 30 September 2021.

Submission deadline: 31 May 2021  
Info: altascuola@fscire.it

### REFORC GOES HYBRID!

The Tenth Annual RefoRC Conference on Early Modern Christianity planned for 6–8 May 2021 in Budapest will be a hybrid event: this means that scholars will be able to attend both in-person and virtually. As a result, the deadline for short paper submissions has been extended and the registration fees have been reduced.

Extended deadline for short paper submissions: 1 March 2021  
The deadline for registration without a paper will remain the same: 5 May 2021.



Peter and Birgit Kainz, *Allegorie auf das Toleranzpatent Josephs II. vom 13. Oktober 1781*, 1785 (© Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien)

### IQSA AND FSCIRE

The International Qur’anic Studies Association (IQSA) is the first learned society dedicated to the study of the Qur’an. It holds conferences around the world and publishes cutting-edge research on all aspects of the Qur’an. The IQSA community and its partners include scholars, students, publishers, and members of the public. Its international meeting will be organised with the collaboration of Fscire and will be held from 4 to 11 July 2021 in Palermo, seat of the Giorgio La Pira Library and Research Centre for Islamic History and Doctrines.



WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT IF20...



The Fountain of Neptune, Bologna (photo: Fscire)

“The G20 Interfaith Forum 2020 brought together thousands of religious leaders, experts, and policymakers, created spaces for dialogue on our shared global challenges, and made a clear case for why sustainable development and inclusive policymaking require religious participation. I thank Saudi Arabia’s G20 Presidency for its commitment to engaging and partnering with religious communities and interfaith dialogue to solve these challenges and look forward to building continued recognition for the unique contribution of religious communities and deepening the dialogue with the Italian Presidency of the G20 in 2021”.

Faisal bin Muammar,  
Secretary General of the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)

“The Italian Presidency of the G20 will offer unprecedented possibilities to link political and interreligious insights. Italy’s Mediterranean position and its sophisticated appreciation for religious roles in contemporary society promise a dynamic dialogue where different perspectives can make their voices heard at the policy tables. The G20 Interfaith Forum in Bologna will bring diverse and creative voices to focus on today’s urgent global agenda”.

Katherine Marshall,  
Vice President of the G20 Interfaith Association

“As a professor of comparative law who is especially interested in law and religion, I am very much looking forward to this year’s G20 Interfaith Forum. It will provide an invaluable learning occasion and a unique opportunity to extend the discussion among scholars, religious leaders, and political actors, who all strongly believe that human rights should never be the monopoly of a given culture but the common language of all human beings”.

Susanna Mancini,  
Chair of Comparative Constitutional Law at the University of Bologna School of Law

... AND WHAT’S THE IF20 JOB?

These are the Standing Working Groups, established by IF20, that work throughout the whole year in order to address highly relevant and global issues.

- Reducing Poverty and Inequality
- Religion, Health, and Wellbeing
- Education and Religious Literacy
- Gender Equality
- Religion and Environment
- Religion, Technology, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
- Refugees, Displacement, and Migration
- Humanitarian Aid
- Children and Youth

B I B L I O

Saretta Marotta

GLI ANNI DELLA PAZIENZA

Bea, l’ecumenismo e il Sant’Uffizio di Pio XII

In June 1960, John XXIII revealed the names of the presidents of the preparatory commissions for the Council, and it was astonishing to see Cardinal Bea nominated as head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. What did the cardinal, a conservative exegete and one of Pius XII’s most trusted collaborators, have to do with the ecumenical springtime expected to emerge from Vatican II, and precisely from that Secretariat? Yet the German Jesuit would soon reveal himself to be an authoritative protagonist of the Council’s renewal and one of the most faithful interpreters of Roncalli’s legacy. What lies behind what appeared to many as a sudden conversion? This very question, which historiography has referred to as “the Bea enigma”, is what this volume sheds light on, thanks to the opening of new documentary reserves, including the cardinal’s personal archives in Munich.

Il Mulino (Testi, ricerche e fonti), pp. 768  
ISBN 978-88-15-28041-1



Alberto Melloni (dir.)

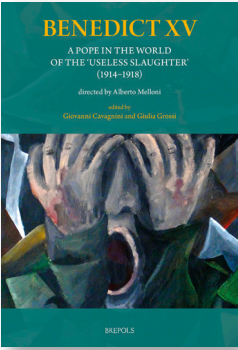
Giovanni Cavagnini & Giulia Grossi (eds.)

BENEDICT XV

A Pope in the World of the ‘Useless Slaughter’ (1914–1918)

Benedict XV is certainly one of the popes of the contemporary age who had the most singular fate. Although he was one of the protagonists of World War I, which he defined as a “useless slaughter”, he appears today to have almost been forgotten both by the church – which a century after his death has not yet started the process of his beatification – and by historians – one of whom, John Pollard, defined him as the “unknown pope”. The work sheds light on a crucial figure in the history of the church, Europe, and the world in the 20th century, investigating the essential aspects of his biography and pontificate. The result is a complex picture that highlights the modernity of a figure who, though soon forgotten, would leave a profound mark on the “short twentieth century”.

Brepols, 2. vols, pp. 1708  
ISBN: 978-2-503-58289-4



Alberto Melloni (dir.)

PALERMO OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Islamic History, Doctrines and Sources 1 (2021)

Palermo Occasional Papers: Islamic History, Doctrines and Sources is an international, refereed, multidisciplinary journal dedicated to publishing scholarly articles on the history of Islam and its doctrines, including, among other topics, Theology, Philosophy, Sufism, Literature, and Fiqh.

The journal depends on the Giorgio La Pira Library and Research Centre in Palermo, is available in print and is published twice a year in English; its aim is to become a significant, new platform for discussion in the field of Islamic studies.

The journal welcomes unpublished manuscripts and invites submissions from researchers specialising in Islamic intellectual traditions.

Fscire Press, pp. 85



THANK YOU

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